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WASHINGTON POST
AND TIMES HERALDIron Curtain Curtain-Raiser*VIPs Applaud Russian Pianist*

By Frances Roisan

THE NATIONAL Symphony Orchestra's season opened last night to a full house and VIP audience, all intent on hearing 21-year-old Russian prize pianist, Vladimir Ashkenazy make his American debut.

"This is new to the top," said smiling Russian Ambassador Mikhail Menchikov, making his appearance at Constitution Hall without Mme. Menchikov who is in Moscow. After the performance, the Ambassador escorted the young pianist to a champagne reception at the Arts Club of Washington given by the Symphony's Board of Directors.

Guests of the Ambassador included the Czech Ambassador, Dr.

Karel Petracek, Romanian Ambassador Silviu Brucan and Polish Ambassador and Mme. Romuald Spychalski (It was at the International Chopin contest in Warsaw that Ashkenazy won second place in 1955.)

Another group of Iron Curtain officials applauded from the box held by Russian Cultural Counselor,

Ben Paul. (See review on Page D11)

Boris Tarkenton, Scott Linn of the American Western Division of the State Department, and a number of other Hungarian and Czech officials and Mrs. Zdenek.

MOST of the enthusiastic audience came in their clothes of various colors to the box holders who varied from simple full evening dress. Austrian Ambassador had glamorous blonde Mrs. Wilfried Fritzer, were there with their 11-year daughter Sylvia, 13-year-old of Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Hietzke. The latter had entertained at dinner earlier for the Pianist at the Mayflower and for Mrs. Irene Caldwell, Maj. Rudolph Temple and a

group of young people, Catherine and Ben Cabell and Preston Pitts.

Mrs. Arthur Summerfield, wife of the Postmaster General, arrived wearing a ballarina dress of cut red velvet over black taffeta and a velvet stole. Her husband is out in Chicago "on a speaking tour" she said. In her party included Mrs. Debra Seiden, wife of the Deputy Postmaster General; Commissioner of Indian Affairs and Mrs. Glenn Emerson and Mrs. John Kibbin, wife of the Assistant Postmaster General.

Highlights popped in Australian Ambassador Mrs. Howard South, sitting in with Mrs. George McGovern, Morris and Mrs. John Patterson. Up by the Associate Justice of the Supreme Court, William Brennan was seated with Assistant to the Secretary of the Treasury and Mrs. James Hendrick and Caroline N.

Among those standing up in the boxes for the playing

of the National Anthem were Mr. and Mrs. Orma Wilson, Mr. and Mrs. Cyrus Ching, the President of the Symphony Association and Mrs. Carson Fralicy, the George N. Wilson and former Congressman and Mrs. Gordon D. Wilson.